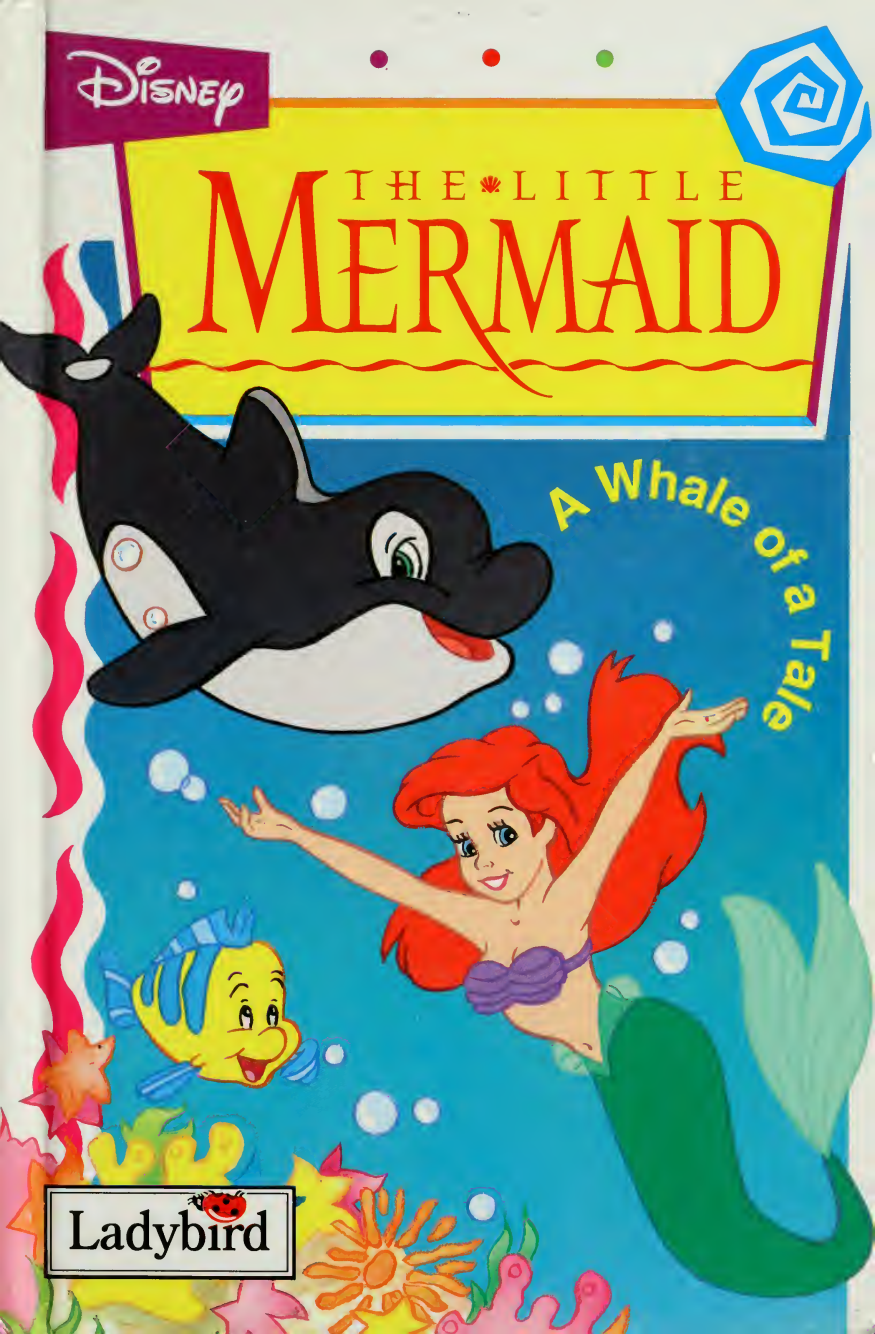
Disney
THE LITTLE
MERMAID
A Whale of a Tale
Ladybird

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Published by Ladybird Books Ltd Loughborough Leicestershire UK

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Disney

THE LITTLE MERMAID

A Whale of a Tale

Ladybird

One day Ariel a mermaid princess and her friend Flounder were out swimming in the warm sea. Ariel's beautiful red hair spread out behind her as she twisted through some coral caverns.

Suddenly they heard a strange sound.

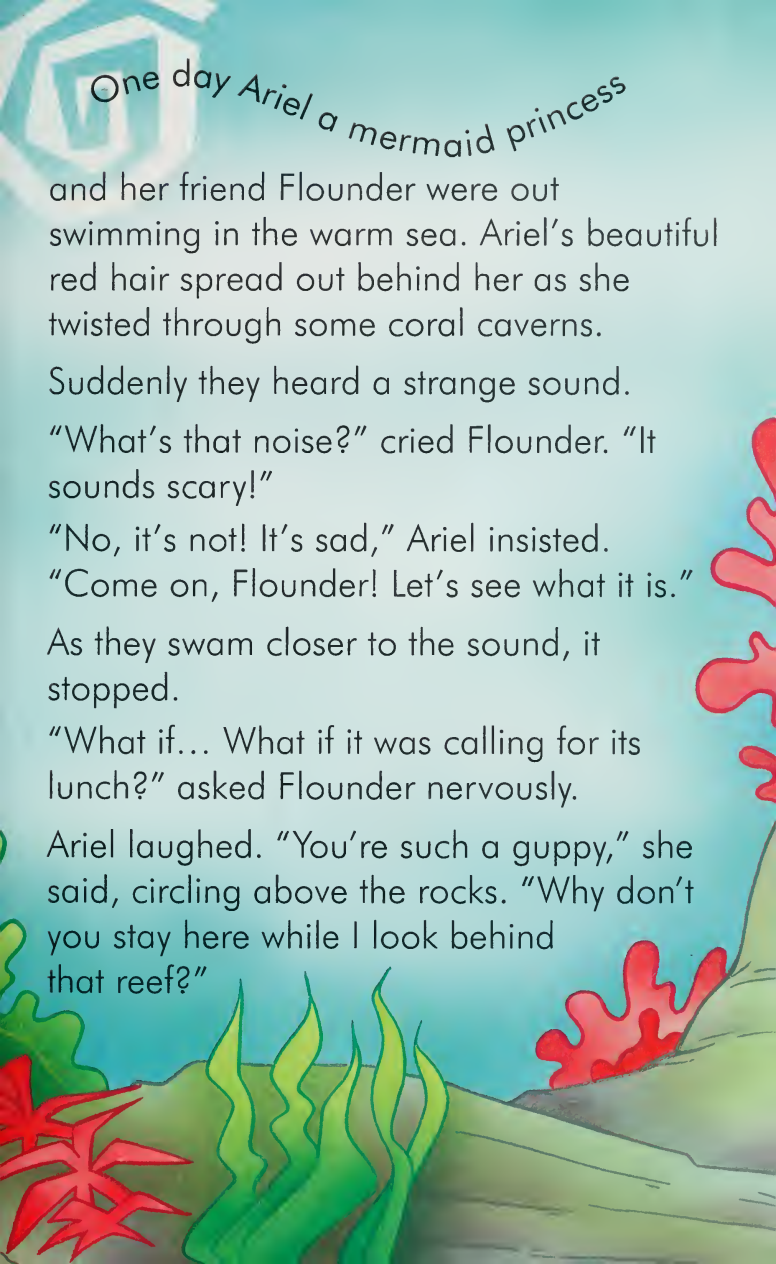
"What's that noise?" cried Flounder. "It sounds scary!"

"No, it's not! It's sad," Ariel insisted. "Come on, Flounder! Let's see what it is."

As they swam closer to the sound, it stopped.

"What if... What if it was calling for its lunch?" asked Flounder nervously.

Ariel laughed. "You're such a guppy," she said, circling above the rocks. "Why don't you stay here while I look behind that reef?"



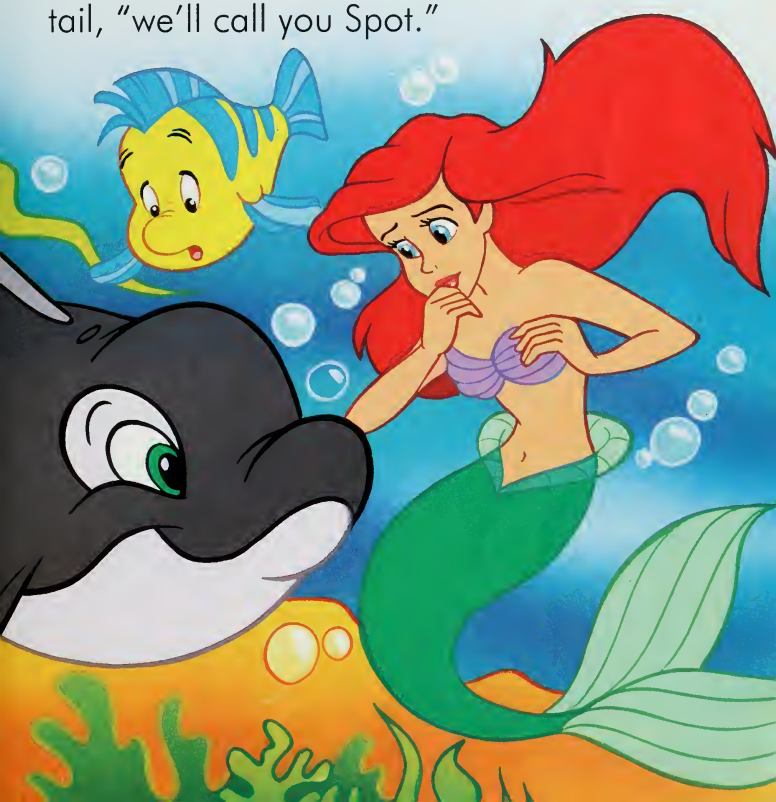
Flounder looked down among the weeds and found himself staring eye to eye with a baby killer whale. It was even more frightened than he was, and rushed away to shelter behind a coral pillar. Flounder let out a piercing cry.

Ariel hurried back towards him. "Oh... it's only a little killer whale," she said.

"Little?" quaked Flounder. "His teeth are bigger than I am!"

"Come on, it's all right..." said Ariel, ignoring Flounder and coaxing the whale out into the open. She stroked its nose and ran her hand along its smooth back.

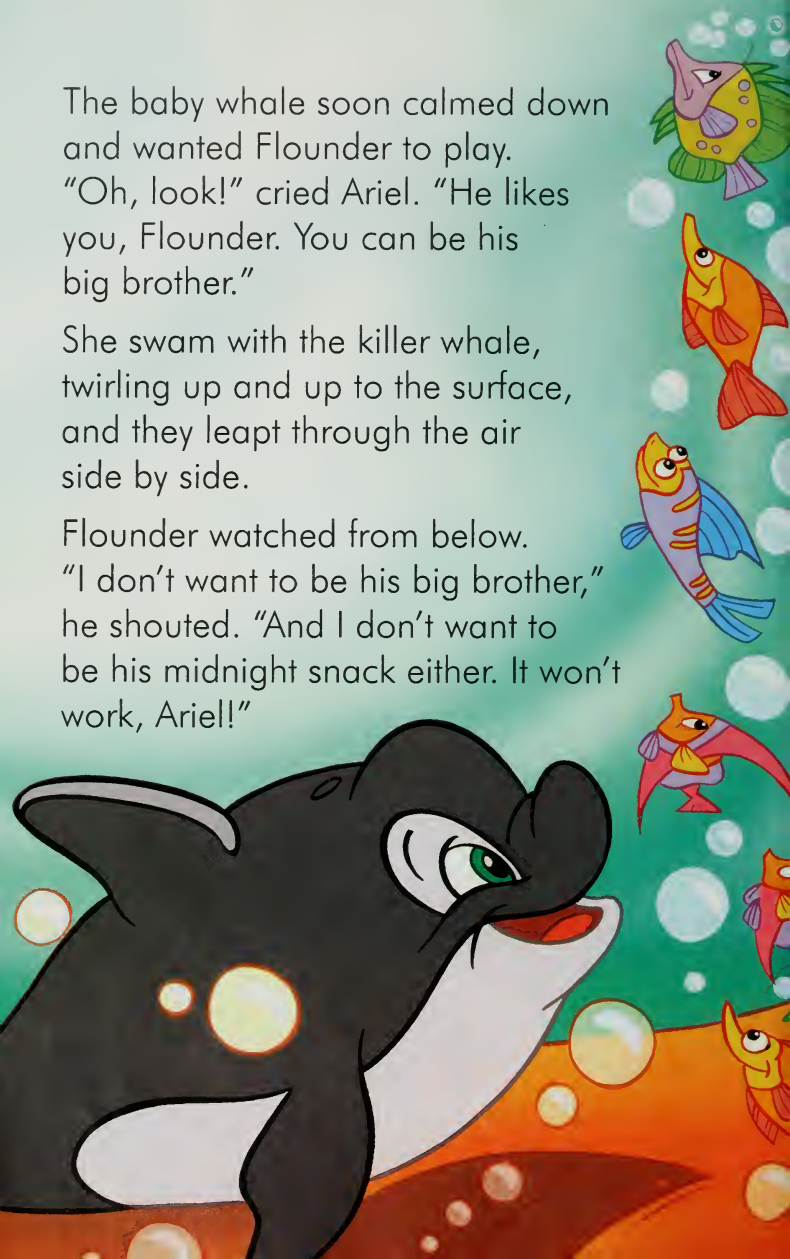
"Don't cry! We'll take care of you. And," she added, looking at a white spot on his tail, "we'll call you Spot."

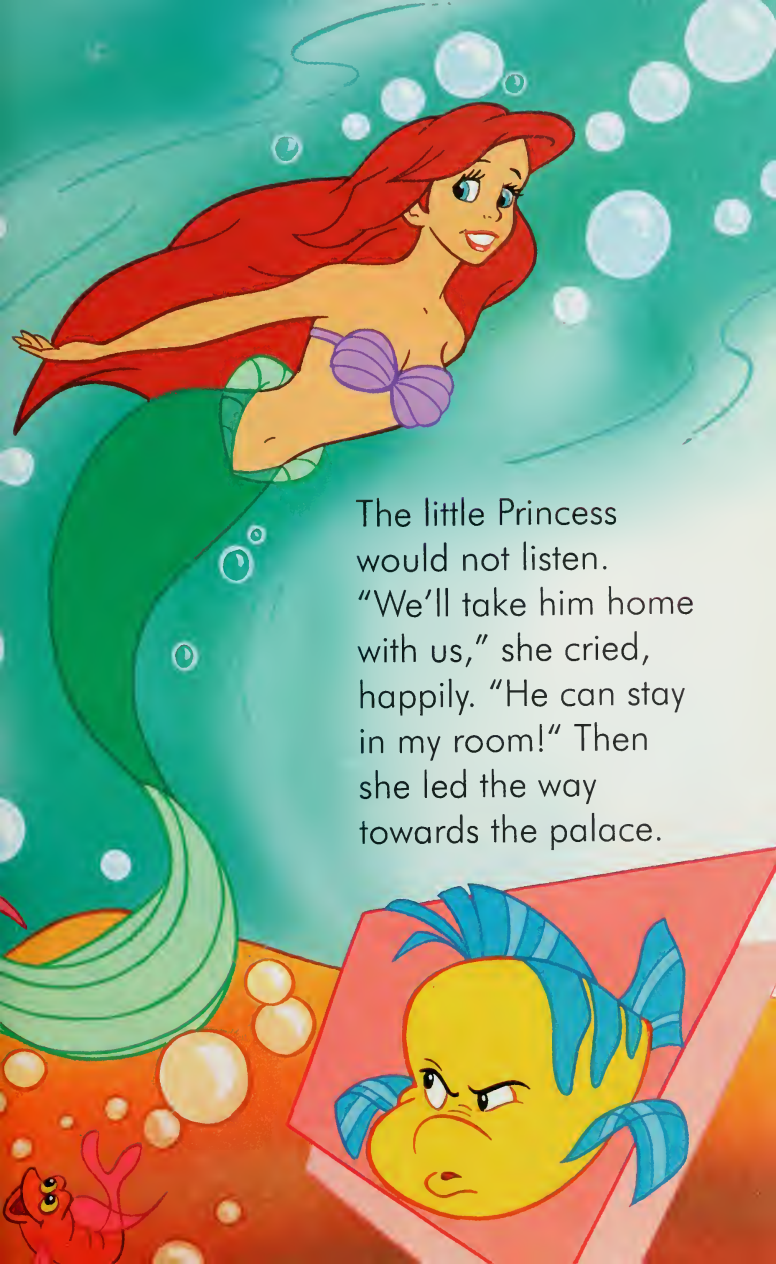


The baby whale soon calmed down and wanted Flounder to play. "Oh, look!" cried Ariel. "He likes you, Flounder. You can be his big brother."

She swam with the killer whale, twirling up and up to the surface, and they leapt through the air side by side.

Flounder watched from below. "I don't want to be his big brother," he shouted. "And I don't want to be his midnight snack either. It won't work, Ariel!"





The little Princess would not listen. "We'll take him home with us," she cried, happily. "He can stay in my room!" Then she led the way towards the palace.

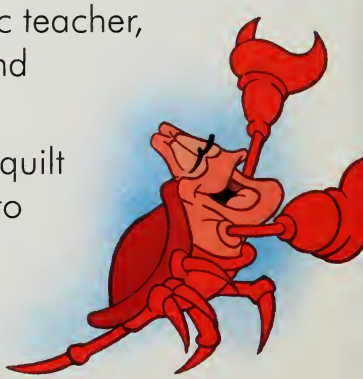
"Ariel! Listen to me!" cried Flounder when they reached his friend's room. "Killer whales are the worst things in the sea. One day he'll just turn on you with all those terrible teeth, and he'll GRRRR!" Flounder pulled a fierce face and charged straight towards Spot.

The baby whale was terrified and crashed around the room knocking furniture and vases in every direction.

"I'm sorry, Spot," laughed Flounder, feeling very brave. "I didn't mean to frighten you. *Oh, no!* There's someone at the door."

Sebastian, Ariel's music teacher, had heard the noise and come to investigate.

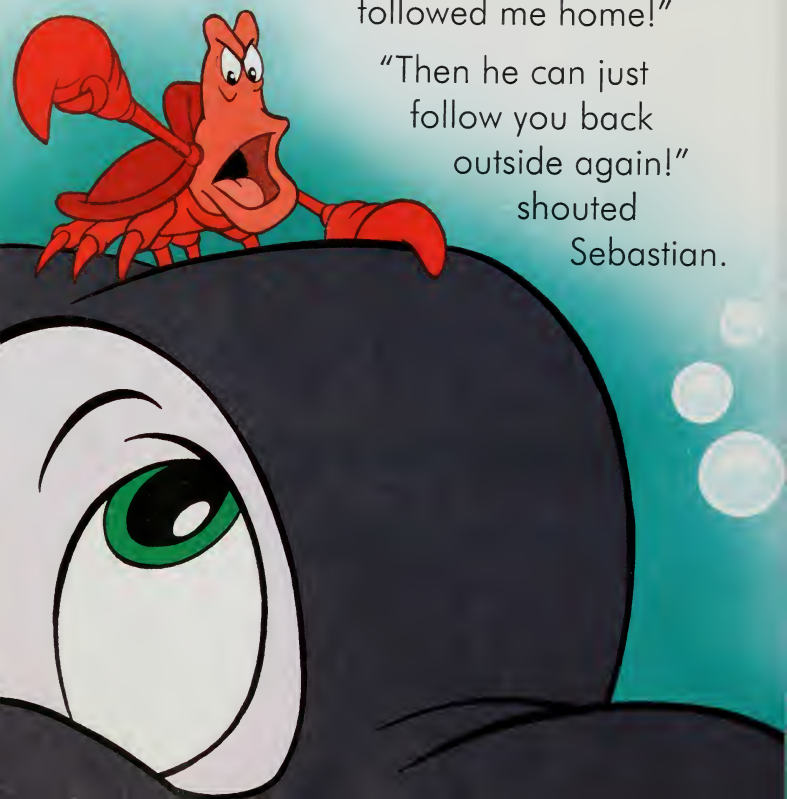
Ariel quickly threw her quilt over Spot, just in time to hide the whale as Sebastian entered.



But Sebastian was suspicious and it wasn't long before he discovered Spot's hiding place. "Yikes! What are you doing with that whale in here?" he cried.

"Oh, him!" Ariel answered trying to think of an explanation. "He just followed me home!"

"Then he can just follow you back outside again!" shouted Sebastian.



"But he'll die out there," pleaded Ariel. "He's only a baby. You won't tell Daddy, will you *Uncle* Sebastian?"

The crab's tough manner disappeared. He never could refuse Ariel when she flashed her warm, beautiful smile at him. "What whale?" he sighed. "But don't you *Uncle* Sebastian me, young lady! And you, Spot, keep away!"

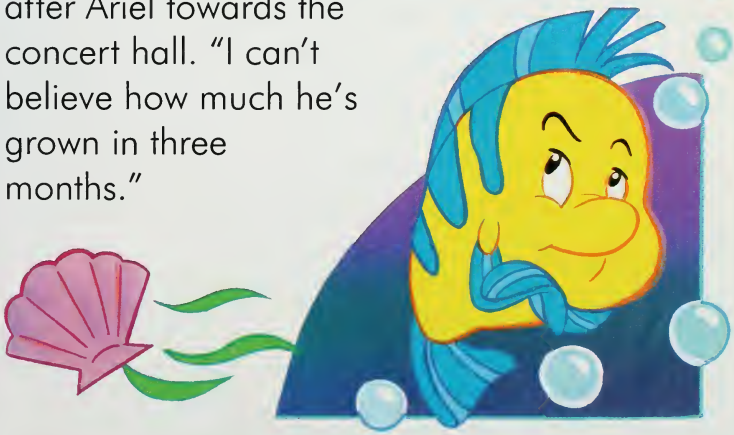
Spot playfully picked up Sebastian and flicked him against the wall with his tail.

The months passed and Ariel cared secretly for the baby whale, bringing him plenty to eat and taking him out for a swim when no one was looking.

Soon it was time for the Royal Spring Concert. Sebastian was so busy making the arrangements that he completely forgot about Ariel's pet.

On the day of the concert, the little mermaid made sure that Spot was comfortable and got ready to leave. "There you are, Spot!" she said. "You be good now. I'll be back soon. Good night, baby..."

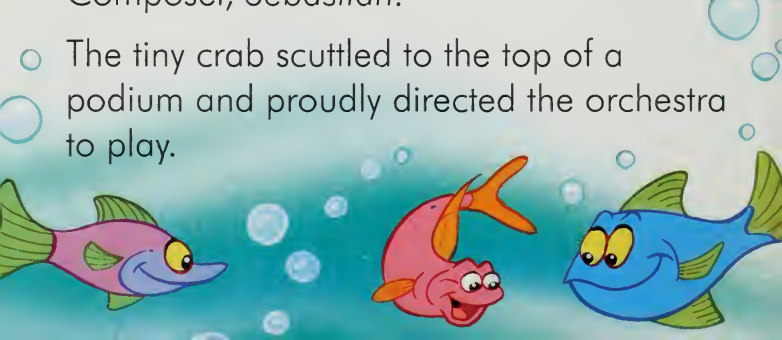
"Some baby!" thought Flounder, swimming after Ariel towards the concert hall. "I can't believe how much he's grown in three months."



Ariel and Flounder slipped into the royal box beside her father, just as the concert started.

"And for the pleasure of your highness, King Triton," a seahorse was announcing, "we present to you the Royal Court Composer, *Sebastian!*"

The tiny crab scuttled to the top of a podium and proudly directed the orchestra to play.



Stingrays swirled... Catfish purred... Seahorses danced... Sebastian sang, and the huge audience cheered with delight.

Sharks jived... Electric eels sparkled round the hall... *and a baby killer whale pushed his way onto the stage*... It was Spot! He had heard the music and decided to join in the fun.

The crowd rushed out of the concert hall in terror as the stage collapsed.

Later that evening Ariel stood solemnly before her father's throne.

"What were you thinking of?" demanded King Triton. "Hiding a whale in the palace! People could have been killed. The whole palace could have been destroyed."

"Spot didn't mean any harm," pleaded Ariel. "He's just..."

"I don't blame him for this destruction," interrupted her father. "He is a wild animal. But you and Flounder *are* responsible.

"And so are *you*, Sebastian!" added the King, noticing the crab hiding nearby. "You have two weeks to teach Spot how to survive, how to hunt in the open sea and how to defend himself. Then he's on his own. And *that's* an end to the matter."

Training Spot was not easy. Under Ariel's care, the whale had become very gentle and trusting and he refused to defend himself.

"The sharks will have him for breakfast if he won't learn to fight!" moaned Sebastian.

Ariel knew Sebastian was right. She was very worried.

"I know!" said Flounder. "I'll pretend to be a shark, and chase him!" Spot looked timid. Flounder puffed himself up to look as menacing as possible and prepared to charge.

"Be careful!" warned Ariel.

But Spot glanced up again at Flounder and fled into the distance.

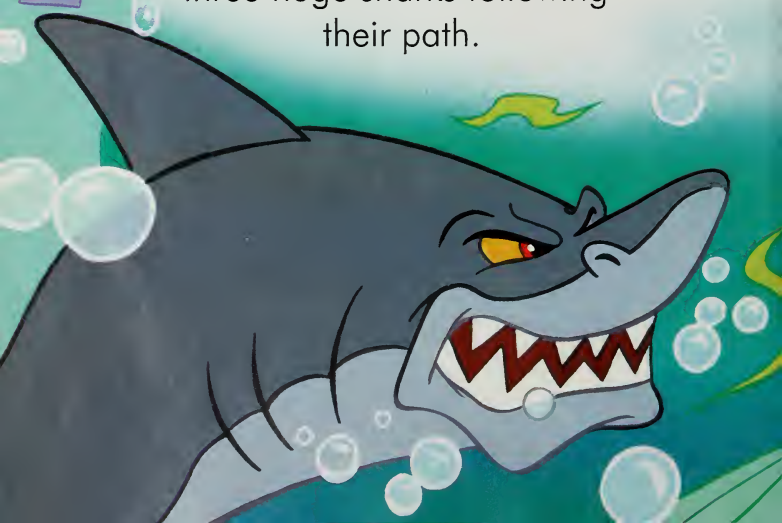
"He's never going to get it, is he, Sebastian?" sighed Ariel. "It's all my fault. I should never have taken him home."

Spot slowly made his way back to his friends.

"Oh, poor Spot," said Ariel, "you're tired out. We'll soon have you tucked up indoors."

"No! No!" ordered Sebastian. "Spot has to learn to stay outside. Your father put me in charge and I say he must not go back into the palace."

As Ariel and Sebastian started to argue, dark shadows fell over them. They looked up, and saw three huge sharks following their path.



"Swim for your lives!" shouted Ariel.

They swam as fast as they could, narrowly keeping ahead of the sharks' jaws. They twisted and dived through the coral, but the sharks just crashed through behind them.

Suddenly Ariel realised one of her friends was missing. "Sebastian," she gasped, "we've left Spot behind!"

But the killer whale was not far away. He had watched the sharks chase his friends into the coral. His wild heart beat fast with fury. He knew exactly what to do. Crashing through the water like a tidal wave, he bounced the sharks against the rocks.

"Spot! You saved us!" Ariel cried, delighted. "My father will have to let you stay now!"

But Spot wasn't listening. He had heard a deep, sweet song somewhere above him – *a whale song*!

"What is it, Spot?" whispered Ariel. "Is it your family?"

The sun glinted through the water on a school of killer whales – Spot swam at once to join them.

"It's right for him to leave," the little mermaid said, feeling a small lump in her throat. "We'd better go home too…"

Then, with a great rush of water, Spot was there in front of her. "Oh Spot!" cried Ariel. "You came back!" The two hovered in the water for a moment, looking at one another. "To say goodbye? Is that it, Spot?"

The whale nodded, but still he didn't swim away.

"Go home, Spot!" Ariel said gently. "You're not *my* whale any more."

"Goodbye, Spot," cried Flounder. "You were a good baby brother."

"Now, you take care," said Sebastian. "And don't forget everything I taught you."

Spot would never forget, and to prove it he picked his friend Sebastian up with his tail and flicked him away through the water.

Ariel and Flounder watched Spot swim away with his family. "Will he be all right?" Flounder asked.

"I'm sure he will," said Ariel. "Come on! We'd better see where Sebastian landed." And they swam happily away.

Ariel adopts a lost baby killer whale that she keeps secretly in her bedroom. All is well until Spot decides to star in a special Spring concert...

Published by LADYBIRD BOOKS LTD
Loughborough Leicestershire UK
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Series D248 – Pocket Tales

Printed in the United Kingdom
by Ladybird Books Ltd – Loughborough

ISBN 0-7214-4279-X

9 780721 442792 >

£1.99
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